

**City of Bloomington Utilities Department**

**Wastewater Treatment Labor-Management Committee**

**Second Activities Report to the Utilities Service Board**

**For the period October 2002 through December 2003**

**Submitted: March 22, 2004**

**UTILITIES DEPARTMENT LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**  
**SECOND ACTIVITIES REPORT TO THE UTILITIES SERVICE BOARD**

For the period October 2002 through December 2003

**INTRODUCTION**

This is the second report of activities for the CBU Wastewater Treatment Labor-Management Committee (LMC) presented to the Utilities Service Board. It covers the fifteen-month period from October 2002 through December 2003. For reference, please see the first LMC annual report, dated December 2002, which reported the committee's activities from its inception in August 2001 through September 2002.

During the period covered by this report, the LMC met a total of twenty-eight times or an average of approximately twice a month. During its first year, the LMC met weekly as it formulated plans and engaged in numerous training and other start-up activities.

**ACCOMPLISHMENT HIGHLIGHTS**

The past fifteen months of LMC operations resulted in a number of accomplishments.

The development of standard operating and maintenance procedures (SOP documentation and OPS32 automation) for both Dillman Road and Blucher Poole continued throughout the period covered by this report. By the end of 2003, the procedures for Dillman Road were all but complete and those for Blucher Poole were not far behind. The committee wishes to thank Brian Kleinman (former CBU intern) and Elissa Gutt (current LMC intern) for their assistance in these regards.

Laboratory procedures have been reviewed and upgraded at both plants. At this time, the LMC is satisfied that lab operations at both plants are adequate to meet all state and federal guidelines. The issue of installing a laboratory information management system, as called for in the 2002 CBU Plant Management RFP, will be revisited when the Dillman Road administration/lab renovation project goes forward, or when there is a substantial change in work volume or procedures at one or the other treatment plants.

In October 2002, the LMC agreed to establish a Plant Safety Sub-Committee. Since then, this sub-committee has met on a monthly basis and, with assistance from Brian Wilson (Risk Management), has been responsible for numerous safety improvements at both of the City's wastewater treatment plants. Not incidentally, the sub-committee has also involved workers and management at the Monroe water treatment plant.

In April 2003, the LMC conducted a second employee survey at both treatment plants. The results of that survey, presented to the Utilities Service Board in July 2003, indicated that there has apparently been a significant improvement in overall employee attitudes at both treatment plants over the last year or so. For example, the percentage of respondents

who rated the "overall relationship between workers and managers" at the treatment plants as "above average" increased from 36 to 79 compared to a similar survey taken about the same time in 2002. And 95 percent said they are now more than "somewhat willing" to work with others for meaningful improvements at the plants.

The LMC was responsible for organizing the first annual employee picnic held at Karst Park in September 2003. The event, to which Monroe Plant employees were also invited, entailed a great deal of planning and coordination on the part of many employees, most of whom were not LMC members. Although there were some "glitches," the picnic was an overall success and the LMC plans to continue and expand such activities in the future.

During the period of the report, the LMC continued to support the work of standing sub-committees and create new ones to meet identified needs. As already mentioned, the SOP/CMMS Sub-Committee continued to make solid progress; the Benchmarking Sub-Committee was reconstituted and, with CBU approval, has retained the consulting firm of Malcolm Pirnie to assist with its work; activities of the newly-formed Plant Safety Sub-Committee are referenced above; the new Events Sub-Committee was largely responsible for the September 2003 employee picnic; an Awards Sub-Committee has already recognized the contributions of several plant employees; a Website Sub-Committee was established to produce and manage an LMC link on City's CBU website; and a Training Sub-Committee was re-established to coordinate employee and committee training. A current list of LMC sub-committees and their goals is attached.

#### **OTHER ACTIVITIES OF INTEREST AND NOTE**

Throughout the reporting period, the LMC had a representative in attendance at weekly CBU staff meetings.

The LMC approved and assisted with the job description for hiring a new intern to work exclusively with the committee. Elissa Gutt began her new job in September 2003.

The LMC amended its by-laws to change its meeting quorum in situations where there are one or more vacancies on the committee.

The LMC developed a presentation proposal for the National Labor-Management Conference to be held in Chicago in June 2004.

The LMC met and shared ideas and experiences with a similar committee established by the City of Bloomington Fire Department.

The LMC laid plans for the creation of additional sub-committees, for example, dealing with training, process control and trouble shooting at the treatment plants.

## **SUMMARY AND GOALS FOR THE COMING YEAR**

The LMC has scheduled a retreat for March 2004 at which it will continue its own training and make plans for the future. One major task will be to assess the committee's progress in meeting the goals and obligations laid out in the Employee Proposal to the CBU in 2001 which resulted in the creation of the Labor-Management Committee.

Looking back over the last two-plus years, there is general agreement by most that the LMC has accomplished a great deal. There is also an awareness that continuing the progress of the past will require renewed effort and attention in the months ahead.

The LMC thanks everyone, throughout the CBU, the City, and beyond, who have assisted and provided support since its inception. It seems increasingly clear that the decision to establish the LMC was sound and that, as a result, the City's wastewater treatment plants are, today, better places to work, with more responsible and satisfied employees than perhaps ever before.

Finally, the LMC thanks Sam Mills, Jon Martin, and Tony Walden who served as committee members during the period covered by this report. In addition, it thanks all of the treatment plant employees and others who have assisted in various and important ways with projects undertaken by the committee.

Questions for the committee and requests for other information can be directed to any of the LMC members listed below.